

Division of Public Health Celebrates National Immunization Awareness Month

DOVER – Every year, thousands of Americans are hospitalized, and some die, from diseases that could have been prevented by vaccination. To celebrate the importance of immunizations for all ages, the Division of Public Health (DPH) is joining with partners nationwide in recognizing August as National Immunization Awareness Month.

“There is a misconception among many adults that vaccines are only for children,” said DHSS Secretary Rita Landgraf. “The truth is you never outgrow the need for immunizations.”

The specific vaccines an adult needs are determined by factors such as age, lifestyle, risk factors, travel, and immunizations previously received (i.e.: tetanus, Hepatitis A and B). All adults should talk to their health care professionals to make sure they are up to date on vaccines recommended for them.

When children are not vaccinated, they are at increased risk of infection and can also spread these diseases to others in their classrooms, their communities, and their families. This includes infecting babies who may be too young to be fully vaccinated and people with immune systems weakened by cancer or other health conditions.

“Getting children all of the vaccines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is one of the most important things parents can do to protect their children from serious infections,” said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. “If you haven’t done so already, now is the time to check with your doctor to find out what vaccines your children may need.”

Ensuring pregnant women are immunized is also important. The two vaccines routinely recommended during pregnancy are the pertussis or whooping cough vaccine (Tdap) and the flu shot.

“Getting a flu shot is the best way to protect a pregnant woman from the flu and prevent serious flu-related complications, such as premature labor and delivery. When you get a whooping cough vaccine during each pregnancy, you’ll pass on antibodies that will help protect your baby for the first months of life,” said Dr. Martin Luta, chief for DPH’s Bureau of Communicable Diseases.

In addition to DPH’s efforts, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is calling on partners, individuals, families, public health workers, and health care professionals to join the #VaxWithMe Thunderclap.

#VaxWithMe is a social and digital media campaign being launched by the CDC to bring a personal, empowering, and impactful aspect to vaccine messages.

To join the #VaxWithMe Thunderclap, visit <https://www.thunderclap.it/projects/44448-support-vaccination-vaxwithme>. Thunderclap is a platform that uses the power of crowds to amplify a single important message. The #VaxWithMe Thunderclap message will go live on Aug. 17 at 3:00 p.m.

To find out which vaccines you or your children may need and where you can get vaccinated, visit <http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dph/dpc/immunize.html> or <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines> or call the DPH Immunization Program at 800-282-8672.

A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person’s spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY

availability in Delaware, visit <http://delawarerelay.com>.

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.